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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

25X1

COUNTRY China (Sinkiang)

SUBJECT The Khara Irtish River Traffic

DATE DISTR. 29 Apr 53

NO. OF PAGES 1

NO. OF ENCLS.

SUPP.
REPORT

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1. The Khara Irtish river boats are identical to the ones operated on the Ili River, between Kure, Sinkiang, and Lake Balkash, USSR. The Khara Irtish boats made two trips a year, in May and June, between Lake Zaisan, USSR, and the Sinkiang towns of Khabakhe (Hapaho) and Burchun (Puerhtsin). On each of the two yearly trips these river boats, or tugs, always pulled two barges with them, dropping off one at Khabakhe (situated at the point where the Khara River runs into the Khara Irtish) and the other at Burchun.
2. These boats, which were manned by Soviet personnel, flew only the Soviet flag, when underway, but added the Chinese flag when docked. They brought various types of farm and mining equipment to Sinkiang and returned to the USSR laden with ore.
3. The river boats, which are actually coal fueled, shallow-draft tugs, are constructed of plywood, the hull being covered with metal sheeting and painted black. Everything above the main deck is unpainted, but varnished in natural finish - a reddish mahogany color. The funnel is painted bright orange. They are approximately 80 feet in length and 40 feet wide. The barges that they pull are about the same size and are of the same construction and color.

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